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Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Summary record of the 297th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 24 November 2006, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Badji ..... (Senegal)

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06-63730 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Developments in the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

2. **The Chairman** on behalf of all the members of the Committee expressed condolences to the Government and people of Lebanon in connection with the assassination on 21 November 2006 of the Minister of Industry of Lebanon, Mr. Pierre Gemayel.

3. On 9 November 2006, the Security Council had met to consider the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question". Addressing the Council in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee, he had expressed the latter's concerns about the Israeli incursion in Beit Hanoun, which had resulted in a dramatic loss of Palestinian civilian life, injuries and destruction of property. He had reminded Israel of its obligations as the occupying Power under international humanitarian and human rights law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention.

4. On 11 November 2006, the Security Council had met to vote on a draft resolution submitted by Qatar. Ten Council members had voted in favour of the draft and four had abstained. The draft, which had not been adopted owing to the negative vote of one permanent member, would have condemned Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip which had caused loss of civilian life as well as Palestinian rocket fire into Israel and would have called for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip. It would also have called on the Quartet to take immediate steps to stabilize the situation, including through the possible establishment of an international mechanism for the protection of the civilian populations.

5. On 15 November 2006, the Human Rights Council had met to consider the human rights violations committed by Israel during the military offensive in the Gaza Strip. By a vote of 32 in favour, 8 against and 6 abstentions, the Council had adopted a resolution calling for a halt to the Israeli operation and had decided to send a fact-finding mission to the area.

6. On 17 November 2006, the General Assembly had resumed its tenth emergency special session to consider illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. He had addressed the Assembly in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee. The representative of Qatar had introduced a draft resolution condemning Israel for the civilian deaths that had occurred in Beit Hanoun and had requested that the Secretary-General should set up a United Nations probe into that incident. The Assembly had adopted resolution A/RES/ES-10/16 with 156 votes in favour, 7 against and 6 abstentions.

7. On 21 November 2006, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs had briefed the Security Council under the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question". He had referred to recent developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the escalation in violence between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

8. **Mr. Hijazi** (Observer for Palestine) said that various meetings had been held in the preceding weeks to discuss Israel's repeated gross violations of human rights. During the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, the vast majority of Member States had adopted a principled and firm position towards Israel's apparent disdain for international law and the rights of the Palestinians. The special session had been held after a permanent member of the Security Council had vetoed a resolution condemning the Israeli massacre of 21 civilians in Beit Hanoun. The adoption of resolution A/RES/ES-10/16 should have sent a clear message to Israel to cease its military aggression in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially the Gaza Strip. Instead, Israel had responded by ignoring the international community and international law and stepping up its military offensive. In the preceding weeks, Israel had carried out incessant attacks in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and had killed over 113 Palestinians, including 35 children.

9. On the political level, Palestinian factions had been working tirelessly to reach an agreement on the formation of a national unity Government that would ensure an end to the political deadlock and the financial sanctions that had been imposed on the Palestinian people. The humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially in the Gaza Strip, had deteriorated significantly. As part of those efforts, Palestinian factions were formulating an initiative in which they would propose an end to the firing of rockets into Israeli towns in exchange for an end to Israeli military aggression against the Occupied

Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Israel had rejected that goodwill initiative outright; its negative response was indicative of its unwillingness to even consider any chance of laying the foundations for a restoration of calm in the area and a return to the political process. The Palestinians nevertheless remained committed to the principles of international law and would continue to work tirelessly with the international community to ensure that Israel's flagrant violations of those principles were stopped. No effort would be spared in ensuring that there was hope for the Palestinian people.

Consideration of the draft resolutions on the question of Palestine

10. The Chairman drew attention to four draft resolutions entitled respectively "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat", "Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat" and "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine", which were to be submitted to the General Assembly under agenda item 14, entitled "Question of Palestine". The texts, which were based on the resolutions adopted at the sixtieth session, had been updated by means of editorial and substantive changes to reflect recent developments and had been discussed and approved by the Bureau, which recommended them for approval by the Committee.

11. With regard to the substantive changes, the draft resolution on the Committee had been expanded by the insertion in paragraph 4, after "support for the Palestinian people", of the phrase "particularly during this critical period of humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting ...". At the end of the paragraph, "to continue" had been added before "to involve".

12. In the draft resolution on the work of the Division, the last part of paragraph 2, following the words "constructive contribution", now read "through assisting the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in the implementation of its mandate;". In paragraph 3, the words "liaison and cooperation with civil society" had been inserted after "international community".

13. In paragraph 6, the words "under the guidance of the Committee" had been inserted after "to organize", in order to clarify the respective roles of the Division and the Committee in organizing the activities.

14. In the draft on the special information programme, on the question of Palestine, a new preambular paragraph had been added, reaffirming that the United Nations had a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question was resolved in a satisfactory manner.

15. *The three draft resolutions were approved.*

16. **The Chairman**, drawing attention to the substantive changes in the draft resolution entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine", said that the sixteenth, twentieth and twenty-sixth preambular paragraphs were new.

17. The fourteenth preambular paragraph had been amended to read "*Reaffirming also* the illegality of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem, including measures such as the so-called E-1 plan and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the status of the City and Territory as a whole,".

18. The twenty-second preambular paragraph had been amended by changing the first words to "*Welcoming and strongly encouraging*" and adding at the end, after "the Palestinian people", the phrase "particularly during this critical period of humanitarian hardship and financial crisis being endured by the Palestinian people,".

19. The twenty-third preambular paragraph had been expanded by adding, at the end, after "damaged institutions", the phrase "and *emphasizing* the need to preserve the institutions and infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority,".

20. The twenty-fourth preambular paragraph had been amended by inserting the words "the displacement of civilians" after "Palestinian property and infrastructure," and the word "steep" before the word "deterioration".

21. Paragraph 4, which read: "*Encourages* the Security Council in particular, in line with its Charter authority and responsibilities, to become more active in the efforts towards achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and to engage the Quartet in this regard;" was new.

22. Paragraph 5 had been amended by inserting "themselves" after "the parties" and "and to immediately resume direct peace negotiations" after "28 September 2000,".

23. Paragraph 6, which read: "*Calls upon* the international community, including the Quartet, to take immediate steps including confidence-building measures between the parties, aimed at supporting a resumption of peace negotiations and the revival of the peace process;" was new.

24. Paragraph 11 had been amended by adding at the end "and *emphasizes also* in this regard the need for the implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access and the Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossing".

25. Paragraph 12 had been amended to read: "*Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and that it cease all of its unlawful and unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the character and status of the Territory, including, inter alia, via the de facto annexation of land, and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations;".

26. Paragraph 16 of the text adopted at the sixtieth session had been deleted.

27. *The draft resolution entitled "Peaceful solution of the question of Palestine" was approved.*

United Nations Asian Meeting in support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 15-16 December 2006, and United Nations Forum of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People, 17 December 2006, Kuala Lumpur (Working Paper No. 5)

28. **The Chairman** drew attention to Working Paper No. 5, setting out the provisional programme for the Kuala Lumpur Meeting. The two-day meeting would review the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and discuss efforts to realize a shared vision of peace between Israelis and Palestinians and the support of countries of Asia and the Pacific for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The third day would be devoted to a Forum of civil society organizations and would include consultations with the Committee. The Committee's delegation to the Conference would be composed of the members of its Bureau, a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, and the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations. He encouraged all members and observers participating in the Committee's work to attend the Meeting.

29. *Working Paper No. 5 was approved.*

Other matters

30. **The Chairman** reminded delegations that the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People would take place on 29 November 2006. He invited all States which were members of or observers to the Committee to be represented at the commemorative meeting in the Trusteeship Council Chamber if possible at the ambassadorial level. In addition, non-Committee members were urged to participate actively in the General Assembly discussion, on agenda item 14, "Question of Palestine", to be held on the same date.

31. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) asked whether the Chairman was consulting with the President of the General Assembly concerning the reconvening of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to discuss the register of damage resulting from the erection of a separation wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

32. **The Chairman** said that an early date was under discussion for the reconvened special session, which would consider the report of the Secretary-General on the register of damage resulting from the separation wall. Care would be taken to ensure that the special session did not coincide either with a meeting of the Security Council or with the forthcoming Asian Meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

33. **Mr. Al-Nasser** (Qatar) said that the theme chosen for the special session was "Sustainable peace", and that it would reconvene on 7 December.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.